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REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY	Hungary	DATE OF INFORMATION	1951
SUBJECT	Economic - Agriculture, cotton cultivation		
HOW PUBLISHED	Semimonthly periodical	DATE DIST. 16 Aug 1951	
WHERE PUBLISHED	Budapest	NO. OF PAGES	2
DATE PUBLISHED	16 Apr, 1 May 1951		
LANGUAGE	Hungarian	SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.	

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Magyar Mezogazdasag, Vol VI, No 8-9, 1951..

METHODS FOR PLANTING COTTON IN HUNGARY

/The information in this report is taken from two articles on cotton-planting methods, one by Laszlo S. Hegedus and one by Dezso Jonas./

The Hungarian Five-Year Plan provides for the planting of an area of 50,000 cadastral yokes of cotton by 1954, with an average yield of 3 quintals per cadastral yoke.

The preparatory work done in 1950 provides a better basis for a higher yield than that done in 1949. In 1949, only a small part of the cotton was planted during the fall and in many cases the quality of the plowing was poor. At the same time, the fertilizer was deposited on the surface of the soil and the plant could not absorb the nutritive materials when the thin topsoil had dried out. During fall 1950, however, simultaneously with subsoil plowing, the artificial fertilizer was mixed with the soil in most areas, thus providing suitable nutritive materials for the plants in water solution.

In spite of the better preparatory work for this year, there are places which have fallen behind, especially in leveling and cultivating. To date, leveling has been completed only up to 80 percent and cultivating only up to 10 percent. Weeding is not done properly, and weeds prevent the soil from being warmed throughout. When cotton begins to sprout, it requires thoroughly warm earth which can best be provided through the use of cultivators. After 10 April, only shallow cultivating should be done, 4 to 6 centimeters in depth.

The quantity of seed, the distance between furrows, and the depth of planting have great significance. When the quantity of seed is fixed (about 35 kilograms per hectare), great care should be taken to utilize the entire quantity, because insufficient seed reduces sprouting as well as yield and makes the fight against soil cracking more difficult.

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If cultivating is done by hand, the distance between furrows should be 60 centimeters; if it is mechanized, the distance should be 65 centimeters. If the furrows are not aligned properly, the cultivating machinery may damage the plants. The machine used for sowing should, therefore, correspond to the width of the cultivating machine.

The depth of planting is generally 4 centimeters. In case of dry soil, an exception may be made and the depth increased to 5 or 6 centimeters.

The direction of the furrows is important. Several factors must be taken into consideration. The direction of the furrows should be perpendicular to the direction of the fall plowing. In areas where winds are strong, the direction of the furrows should be perpendicular to the direction of the winds, generally in a north-south direction. In areas protected from winds, where the cotton may be expected to develop well, the furrows should follow a west-east direction, to permit the sun to penetrate the furrows. In valleys, sowing should be perpendicular to the grade.

All tools and machines which come in contact with seeds should be disinfected with a 5-percent formalin solution.

Before planting, shallow (4-centimeter) cultivating should be carried out, if possible, keeping immediately ahead of the sowing machine. After planting, a harrow, or, in case of drier soil, a light roller should be used. Planting should be begun when the ground reaches a temperature of 11 degrees centigrade at a depth of 50 centimeters. In growing cotton, it is a cardinal rule to complete planting as quickly as possible.

The soil must be watched carefully, and drying and cracking must be combated. Should drying and cracking occur, they must be eliminated in 1 or 2 days. Should cracking occur before the cotton starts sprouting, a roller or a harrow with nails should be applied in a direction perpendicular to the sowing. If the cracks develop, the young leaves may be enveloped. Cultivators or hand rakes must be used. A harrow with nails cannot be used in this case because the young seedlings can be damaged very easily.

Proper density of plants within a certain area is very important. If there are too many, some of them will be stifled. The plants interfere with each others' development. In the southern, warmer part of the country a density of 50,000 to 60,000 plants per cadastral yoke is suggested and in the rest of the country 70,000 to 75,000 would be advisable. In the case of the former, this would mean 5 to 6 and, in that of the latter, 7 to 8 plants per meter. This thinning-out process should be begun with the first appearance of leaves and should be completed in 5 to 7 days. The weakest and least developed plants should be removed first, leaving the better developed ones.

Thinning out should be done by hand exclusively, and the proper distance between plants should be observed. The plants which are pulled out should be removed from the field and buried at a depth of 20 centimeters. If there is sufficient manpower available, two thinning operations are advisable. The first should be done when the first leaves appear, and the second when the second leaves appear.

When inclement weather destroys the seeds or insufficient seedlings appear, additional sowing may be necessary. Seeds soaked in water for 24 hours may be used. No sowing can be done after 15 May. Small-scale sowing should be done by hand. The seed is placed in the soil with the aid of a hoe.

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